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Humbly OFFERRED,

Proving it is inconsistent with the

Interest of England,

THAT THE

CIVIL MAGISTRATE

Should put the

PENAL-LAWS

In Execution against

Protestant Dissenters.

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Reaſons humbly offered, &c.

THAT 'tis the greateſt Intereſt of all Proteſtant States, and particularly of *England*, To give Liberty to men of differing Apprehenſions in the Proteſtant Religion, is evident; if we conſider, That a Prince or State by impoſing the Principles of any one Party in Religion, makes himſelf of that Party, and engages all the reſt againſt him. 'Tis no way prudent for a *Prince*, when his Subjects conſiſt of many differing Judgments, to reſolve to have them all of one mind, (a thing impracticable) or elſe to be their declared Enemy and Perſecutor; 'tis a ready way to interrupt his own quiet and repoſe, without any other effect; for he will never by force and violence unite men in one Opinion, thoſe Differences will rather be fomented, and all Animoſities ariſing thereupon, and men rather fixed and confirmed by ſuch Perſecution, than any way removed from their Principles by it. 'Tis not the having ſeveral parties in Religion under a State, that is in it ſelf dangerous, but 'tis the perſecuting of them that makes them ſo. Firſt, It puts them all under diſcontent, and then unites them together in ſuch diſcontent; *Thuanus*, a wiſe States-man, ſaith, *Heretici, qui pace data factionibus franguntur, perſecutione uniuntur contra rem publicam.* Thoſe who in their Principles largely differ

from each other, when they come to be all bound up together in one common volumn, and linked in the same chain of Persecution and Suffering, will be sure to twist themselves into an united Opposition, to such an undistinguishing severity: Whereas the thing in it self rightly considered, So many divided Interests and Parties in Religion, are much less dangerous than any, and may be prudently managed to ballance each other, and to become generally more safe, and useful to a State, than any united party or interest whatever. He that is suffered to enjoy under a State the freedom of his Religion, when differing from the publick Profession, has not only the common tye of a Subject upon him, for his protection as a man, but the cumulative obligation, and thanks to pay for his Indulgence as a Christian under such a Character. Subjects in such a posture, as they will ever be studious of an opportunity, to testifie their grateful fidelity, and by some eminent Service to lay up a stock of Merit, that may secure their future quiet; so they will of any, most careful not to forfeit so pleasing an Indulgence, by falling under a publick displeasure. A Prince in such a state of things, by making himself a common Father to the whole Protestant Religion, though made up of some differences within it self, will be secured not only of that common Homage of Obedience and Subjection, but with it, that more noble, of the Hearts and Affections of all his Protestant Subjects. To say any party in Religion is disaffected to a State, and therefore not fit for such favour, when such disaffection, if it be, does plainly arise from the Severity of the State against them, in that case; the reason why favour should not be show'd, is remov'd by showing of it: for as persecuting men for their Religion, must necessarily

ceſſarily diſguſt them; ſo giving them the freedom of it, muſt needs equally oblige them. 'Tis no true meaſure to take of any parties in Religion, to ſay the one are better Subjects than the other, when the one are favoured and countenanced, and the other ſtill kept under and oppreſſed; There is no reaſon, but to believe, there is an equal Tendency in all, to love that Prince or State, where they find favour and protection; 'tis a common diſpoſition runs in the blood of all men; And by how much the Principles of any party are leſs taking and plauſible, the leſs dangerous ſtill is that party; and as they will need favour more than others, ſo they muſt needs lye proportionably ſecured to a State, by the Obligations put upon them.

Take it for Truth which is commonly affirmed, That all ſuch for whom Liberty is at any time deſir'd, are men full of Faction and full of Error: For the firſt, 'tis certain, Perſecution will not only continue, but foment ſuch Faction, and give it a plauſible pretence to juſtifie it ſelf upon, whereas a Liberty granted in matters of Conſcience, will either wholly win ſuch men to a due and hearty Obedience, as finding themſelves in a poſture they cannot expect to mend, or elſe will lay them open to ſuch apparent juſtice for puniſhment, and bring them under ſuch a general contempt, as ſhall leave them ſtrip'd of all pretenſions, and render them wholly inconſiderable. 'Tis marvellous prudence to ſeparate between *Conſcience* and *Faction*, which can never be, but by a liberty for the one, that ſo they may diſtinctly puniſh the other: He that hath liberty granted to worſhip God according to his Conſcience, and yet is not ſatisfied, but continues troubleſome, makes every body ready to be his Executioner, and makes that diſcovery which could never have been

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made before; that Faction was his end, and Conſcience but the pretended means; ſuch men will not only lye open to the States juſt ſeverity, but to the hatred of all men, who do generally diſlike ill actions moſt, when they come from men of the beſt pretenſions.

Puniſh men for their Religion, becauſe you judge them Factious, and mix all together, and you fall into this double error; either you puniſh men for Faction, that deſerve it not, and ſo, beſides a piece of injuſtice, do what you can to make thoſe Enemies who are not, nor would not be ſo; or elſe thoſe that are ſo, you give them the pretence of Conſcience to juſtifie themſelves in what ever ſuffering comes upon them: When people differing from the publick Religion, meet to worſhip God, and are ſeized and puniſhed for ſo doing, the Magiſtrate ſaith, *He puniſheth for Faction*; they ſay, *They ſuffer for Religion.* And all people who ſee the actual puniſhment inflicted, for things relating to Conſcience and Religion, will be ſure to believe and pitty them, and be ready to condemn the State. A due Separation, as 'tis beſt to be made, ſo 'twill, only by a liberty given, be obtained: He that intends nothing but to give God the Homage of his Conſcience, will have freedom to do it; and he that under that has other ends and aims, will be juſtly puniſhed for it: But for a State to imbibe a general belief, that all who differ from the State Religion, are factious to the Civil Power, and not to be ſuffered, and ſo to puniſh them as ſuch, and if they be not ſo, to tempt them thereby to be ſo, is to do an act of injuſtice to them, and to forfeit their own prudence towards themſelves.

For the errors you may ſuppoſe men poſſeſſed withall,

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as an eager perſecution is apt to make the profeſſors of them, think them more than ordinary Truths, and themſelves ſome great men in maintaining them; ſo it makes others ſeek after that, when driven into a Corner, which were it in the open ſtreets, no man would Regard. He that preaches and writes under reſtraint, that reſtraint begets him readers and hearers, that would elſe paſs through the World with very little notice taken of him; things difficult and hard to be come by, carry ſome weight in mens expectancy: Fooliſh and abſurd Opinions are onely put to Nurſe by perſecution, and by that made to have ſomething in the concerns and fears of others, which has indeed nothing in it ſelf. The hiding men by a keen purſuit after them, in the profeſſion of ſuch things, keeps them alive; whereas if they were openly preached, written, and diſcourſed of, the folly of them would appear ſuch, as not only others, but the men themſelves would be aſhamed and aweary of them: Beſides, puniſhing men for Religion, where there are ſeveral parties, laies a Foundation of endleſs troubles, and perpetual feuds; for that ill Opinion and anger, which makes one party, when Prevailing, to ſuppreſs and puniſh the reſt, propagates ſtill the ſame anger and diſlike in the parties puniſhed, and begets by ſuch provocation, a certain reſolution to retort the ſame again, and a readineſs to embrace all opportunities to effect it; whereas that party that once gives liberty to the reſt, buries all thoſe evils, and unites all in the common union of their own intereſt and ſecurity. It will be impoſſible to find out a way for men of differing Judgments in Religion, to live together, and enjoy the common advantages which as men they may afford one

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to another; unleſs they exerciſe an Indulgence to each other, in that variety they ſtand in as Chriſtians. Where there are many differences, and a State denies any liberty, but ſtrictly impoſeth the State-Religion upon all, the caſe always falls out to be, that the earneſt deſire of that we call *Liberty of Conſcience*, lies glowing in the Embers of mens diſcontent, and is a thing in it ſelf ſo popular, a thing of ſo great evidence of reaſon, when it may be diſcourſed upon equal terms, and ſo much the concern of every man, but the preſent Impoſers, that 'tis very apt to kindle and flame out, and upon any ſtrait or emergency of the State, either by Forreign War, or Domeſtick Diviſion, to make ſuch an Earthquake, as may endanger the whole; 'Tis moſt Prudent in a State to give Liberty, where there is leaſt power to demand it, thoſe may be gained by giving it, that may prove dangerous in forcing it; to force aud pen men up in ſuch things is wholly unnatural, and will, like Wind penn'd up in the Earth, or the Sea ſhut up by Banks, break out at one time or another with the greater violence. Liberty in Religion was never yet denied in a Proteſtant State, but it had firſt or laſt a miſchievous effect; to inſtruct men in Proteſtant Principles, and then put a yoke of Uniformity upon them, has no more proportion in it, than to educate a man at *Geneva*, that is to live at *Rome*, and to breed him a *Calviniſt* whom you intend for a *Papiſt*.

Were there no other reaſon to make a Prince or a State out of love with puniſhing men for Religion, and matters of that nature, this were ſufficient, to conſider ſuch puniſhment ever falls upon the moſt honeſt of his Subjects in every differing party; men of looſe jugling principles, and unſound Hearts, will be ſure to eſcape the Net; only the ſincere

ſincere plain-hearted man, that cannot diſſemble, is caught; 'twas the deviſe againſt *Daniel* heretofore, They knew in the matters of his God 'twas eaſie to deal with him, becauſe in thoſe he would not upon any terms diſſemble.

This has Three ill Effects alwayes attending it.

1. It diſobliges the beſt ſort of men in every party, whom the State ſhould moſt cheriſh and engage; whatever is ſaid to the contrary, thoſe that are the trueſt Subjects to the Great King, will be alſo found the beſt to his Vicegerents here: 'Tis a ſtrange Heterodox kind of policy, to make all the honeſt, ſincere men in a Nation, of every party, but that one the State adheres to, the object of the States diſpleaſure, and to make Laws that can have no other effect, but their Suffering.

2. All ſtanders by, the generality of a Nation looking on, muſt needs be diſſatisfied, to ſee a Plain honeſt man, upright and punctual in all his dealings amongſt men, puniſhed meerly for his Conſcience to God; and becauſe he will not comply to ſave himſelf, which nothing but his Conſcience can lead him to, and by parting with which, he may at any time Purchaſe his quiet; in ſuch a caſe common ingenuity begets pity for him, if not Proſelytes to him, and great diſlike of the courſe taken with him.

3. Though it be a ſecret, yet 'tis a very ſure and certain way of bringing National Judgments upon a people; no doubt God takes great notice of the Puniſhing men meerly, becauſe they are true to him, for ſo

every man is, that is true to his Conſcience, though it be erroneous. Upon no other account was it, That *Paul* juſtified himſelf before the High-Prieſt, in ſaying, *He had walked before God, in all good Conſcience to that time.* His meaning was, He had gone according to his Light, as a thing Pleaſing to God, though otherwiſe, as to the matter, his Conſcience was erroneous, and his iudgment miſ-informed. And he tells us, afterwards, *That he obtained Mercy from God,* becauſe what he did againſt the Church, was done Ignorantly, and in purſuance of the beſt Light he then had.

The puniſhing men meerly for following the pure dictates of Conſcience, is no doubt the true cauſe of many National miſeries; And a State ſhould be careful to avoid this, as they would preſerve their own ſafety and Welfare. If we look into that which naturally occaſioneth ſeveral Opinions in Religion, 'tis that which a Prince ſhould for his own Intereſt highly encourage, and that is Knowledge; for no doubt, as Knowledge encreaſeth, it expatiates it ſelf into variety of Thoughts and Principles; and as it enlargeth all other Sciences, ſo Religion. Knowledge is the Glory of a Nation, and that by which all matters of Concern to it, as War, Trade, Policy, and every thing elſe is highly enlarged. 'Tis the high Honour of a Prince to Govern a Wiſe and a Knowing People, as well as a Great People; 'Tis an impotent piece of Policy, and equally deſtructive to all publick Intereſt, to ſay, *Subjects muſt be kept ignorant,* as to ſay, *They muſt be kept poor.* They are Maxims only fitted for a Tyrant, and ſuch who only govern for themſelves, and calculate all Intereſts,

Intereſts, as they concentre in their own, and by ſo doing, make themſelves their own Idols. Nothing damps all Noble Undertakings amongſt men of Conſcience, like Impoſition in Religion, it makes them hang down their Heads, it makes them heartleſs in their Callings; If they are denied freedom in Religion, men of Conſcience will care little for any thing elſe. *Solomon* tells us, *A wounded Spirit no man can bear.* He that carries a taint of trouble in his mind about theſe things, is impotent in every thing; 'tis Liberty in Religion that breeds the noble and generous minds. Let a man know his duty to God, and have freedom to perform it, and that man will have Wiſdome and Courage above any man. Impoſing Religion upon men has never other effect, than either to lull men aſleep into implicite ignorance, and ſo make them as ſottiſh and uſeleſs Members of a State, as they are of the Church; or elſe, where it meets with Knowledge and Integrity, ſinks men under the greateſt grief, and provokes them to the greateſt diſ-ſatisfaction. If we look amongſt our ſelves, Who be they that deſire favour in this particular? And who be they that will be gratified and engaged by it, but every where men of Religious Principles? And are not they generally the ſober and ſerious men, that bring good to a Nation? Are not they in all Callings and Trades, generally moſt induſtrious, and thriving? Are not they moſt ſaving in their Expences, and every way, either in War or Peace, moſt uſeful and ſerviceable? 'Tis debauched, looſe, expenſive people that over-live their Eſtates, and neglect their Callings, that help to pull a ſtate down; Such men will be ſure to Conform to any thing, that

ſecures them in preſent Luxury; 'tis the ſober, Serious, Religious ſort of men, that every way make a Nation proſper; to diſcontent ſuch, and to put them into one common Dungeon of imputed Faction, and actual Perſecution, will never be found any right meaſure of a true National Intereſt.

Several things, with great Evidence, ſeem to plead for Moderation and Indulgence here in *England*.

1. The Number and Quantity of thoſe concerned, as well as the Quality is ſuch, that it can be no way prudent to diſcontent them, upon that which will no way compenſate the inconvenience; there can be no good Policy to leave ſo many men, mixed every where, even in the higheſt places of the Nation, under diſ-ſatisfaction, without the leaſt effect, but the reproach of imprudence, in doing it, and to put a diſgraceful diſtinguiſhing Character upon them, as men unfaithful to the State, only becauſe they cannot comply with ſome Ceremonies (as the caſe is generally amongſt us) and worſhip God juſt in the publick way, a thing of no more intrinſick concern to the State, than to have all men of the ſame Opinion in a diſputed point of Philoſophy, and a thing of as equal likelihood to be attain'd. A Subject that gives the ſame teſtimony of his Fidelity to his Prince, that others do, and behaves himſelf in all Civil Concerns, as a faithful and profitable Member of the Commonwealth, and yet is looked upon as a publick enemy, and made the object of publick anger, becauſe he cannot in every Circumſtance comply with publick Religion, is without doubt very ſeverely and impolitickly dealt with. As every Subject hath an intereſt in his Natural

tural Prince, so hath the Prince in every Subject, and should be like the True Mother that would by no means divide the Child.

Let *Liberty of Conscience* be once fitly given, and the root of all mens hopes and pretensions, that desire publick mischief, is pulled up, and the King will be the greatest, and most Beloved Prince that ever yet sate upon the Throne.

2. We shall never have a flourishing Trade without it.

1. Because the Pressure in these things falls generally more upon the Trading sort of men, than any in the Nation; we may see it in the great City, and in all Corporations: It makes many give over Trading, and retire; It makes others remove into *Holland*, and other *Forreign Parts*; as it did heretofore from *Norwich*, to the irrecoverable prejudice of our Clothing Trade, upon the like occasion; And it certainly prevents all *Protestant Strangers* to come to Live and Trade amongst us. It puts great Advantages into the hands of the *Hollander* every way, who have not a better Friend in *Europe*, than *Uniformity* in *England*. As *Liberty of Conscience* here, is that they fear above any thing, so it would insensibly more weaken them, than all the Victories we have obtained over them.

2. Men will never Trade freely, where they do not Live and Converse freely; where a man is afraid to be watch'd to a Conventicle, and all the time he serves God,

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is fain to hide himself; No man will choose to live so, if he can avoid it; every man that cannot conform to the publick Religion, lying under the lash of the Law, will prudently shun both Business and Company, will never lay out his Estate, where 'tis in any mans power to do him a mischief. A man conscious to himself, that he cannot comply with the Law, will avoid medling with any thing, and choose privacy as his best security.

3. 'Tis the King of *Englands* true Interest to become Head of all the Protestant party in the World, and he will never do that, but by first making himself a common Father to all his Protestant Subjects at home. That 'tis his Interest to Head the Protestant party abroad, is plain; because being the greatest and most powerful of all Protestant Princes and States, he will necessarily draw them into a dependence upon him, and desire of Protection from him; by which not only the Protestant Interest in it self will be much secured, by being so united and conjoyned, but the King of *England* also will receive a great Accession of power, by the Influence he will have on so great a part of Christendom, which he may make use of, not only to secure the Protestant Religion against the common Enemy of it, but to advantage himself every way, by the great respect and Interest he will have in all Protestant States.

To bring the Protestants into an union amongst themselves, will be of advantage to every Protestant State, but to none so much as *England*; First, Because *England*

land naturally becomes the Head of ſuch a Union; And Secondly, Becauſe the Deſigns and Practices of the Popiſh party, ever ſince the Reformation, have lain, and will lye more united againſt *England*, than any Proteſtant State, as ſuppoſing that the chief Support of all the reſt; and therefore *England* can never be truly ſafe, nor ſecured in its proper Intereſt, but when 'tis invironed with all Proteſtant States adhering to it, and depending upon it. How ſadly *England* has miſcarried, when it has eſpouſed any other collateral Intereſt but the Proteſtant, has been too obvious, ever ſince the firſt Reformation: *England* has been alwayes greateſt at home, when it has been the greateſt Defender of the Proteſtant Faith abroad. Now if the King will thus rightly ſtate his intereſt abroad, he muſt begin the Work at home; if he perſecute and keep under any of his Proteſtant Subjects at home, thoſe of their Opinion abroad, will never put themſelves under his protection: As he muſt make no diſtinction in Chriſtendom, but *Proteſtant* and *Papiſt*, ſo he muſt make no other amongſt his Subjects at home. He that impoſeth any one Opinion amongſt the *Proteſtants*, and will tolerate no other, makes the diſtinction to be ſtill between *Proteſtant* and *Proteſtant*, and makes himſelf but Head of a Party amongſt them, and will never ſo heed the *Proteſtant* Intereſt, as to oppoſe the *Popiſh* party with it, or unite the *Proteſtants* ſo under him, as to make himſelf their Head.

Who ever would be Head of all the *Proteſtant* Intereſt, muſt have no common Enemy but *Popery*, and concenter all there: Impoſing Conformity to the Opinion

nion of any one *Proteſtant* party, upon all the reſt, is but to make himſelf ſo much the weaker by every diſſenter, and is indeed totally deſtructive to the very being of ſuch a thing.

Laſtly, Liberty of Conſcience is the beſt way to ſecure us to the Proteſtant Faith, and to prevent a relapſe to Popery; the Proteſtant Religion will be faſteſt rooted, by exerting fully the Principles of it, and a throughout adhering to them; By our practice in dealing one with another, to deny thoſe Principles by which we juſtifie our Separation from *Rome*, is the ready way to make them return thither again. *Teach men, that there is no man, nor men under any one denomination, ſince the Apoſtles times, that are infallible in delivering Divine Truth. Teach men, that the Scripture is the only Rule, of Religion, and let them read it: Tell them, they are to follow no men, farther than they follow that Rule, and that every man is Judge according to the beſt Light he hath of that Rule, and how far other men comply with it, and differ from it: And that every man is bound to behave himſelf towards God, according to the Judgement he ſhall ſo make within himſelf*; all which are Proteſtant Principles, and Eternal Truths. And then collect the ſenſe which theſe principles iſſue themſelves into; and how unreaſonable will it then appear to force men to comply with the belief of others, contrary to their own; and when you have bid them uſe their Light and Reaſon, to puniſh them, becauſe they will not oppoſe it, and go againſt it. How can we otherwiſe juſtifie forcing men, where ſuch Principles are avowed, but by a flat denial of them, and recurring

ring to those Popish Weapons of the absolute Power of the Church, and her uncontroulable Authority; and so by condemning others, that upon the exercise of their own Light and Reason now differ from us, we condemn our selves, who upon the same at first departed from *Rome*. When we oppose our selves upon the very same Arguments by which dissenters now amongst our selves make their defence against us; and when we dispute against them, we take up the same Argument the Papists use against us. There is scarce any considerable Argument urged of late for Conformity, and Imposition, but if you trace it to the Seat, you shall find it in *Bellarmine* or *Suarez*. The truth is, He that cannot indure to have any differ from him in Opinion, about the Supernatural Truth of the Gospel, and will have no Toleration of several perswasions of that kind, and thinks it destructive to mankind, and the being of every State, to suffer any so to be; That man is a Protestant by mistake, and will find himself at home in his principles no where but at *Rome*. The farther we remove in our Reformation from the practice and Principles of the Church of *Rome*, and live upon our own, the less like we are to return to it. If we make use of their Arguments and Principles at one time, we may come to use them at another, and at last espouse them all together; and what serves our turn at some times to oppose others, may at last prevail upon our selves. And so 'tis in our practices, reserving any of their Ceremonies, may at last bring us to some of their Doctrines. He that keeps a Holiday, is within a step of praying to that Saint, for whose sake he keeps it, specially if he have the wit to consider why

keeps it. He that kneels, and puts weight upon it, is in a fair way to adoration: and he that is for joyning the Crosſ with Baptiſm, may come to do it after Grace, and croſs himſelf in time. 'Twas Biſhop *Bonners* obſervation, when he ſaw the Reformation, and how many of the Popiſh Ceremonies were retained, being asked what he thought of it, *If they like* (ſaith he) *the taſt of our Broth ſo well, they will eat of our Beef ſhortly.*

2. Liberty of Conſcience is the great means to diffuſe Goſpel-Knowledge in Divine things, and that's the beſt and ſureſt way to bar out Popery, and lock the door upon it for ever. Ignorance is the great and only preparative for implicite Subjection. Chriſtendom cannot (I dare ſay) afford an inſtance, that ever any State or People, where Divine Knowledge, by Liberty of Conſcience, and a Liberty for the Goſpel was ſpread, were in the leaſt danger of turning Apoſtates to Popery, but have grown daily more and more into a deteſtation of it, and generally almoſt every man amongſt them, carrying a Weapon in his underſtanding to defend the Proteſtant Cauſe.

Were Liberty of Conſcience granted in *Italy* and other Popiſh States, we ſhould ſoon ſee the Mitre totter upon the Popes head, and probably ſee as fair Churches there, as in any other part of *Europe*. 'Twas obſerved in the Wars of the *Low Countries*, That when ever any Catholick began to look into the Bible, he was not long liv'd in the Roman Profeſſion.

3. Liberty of Conſcience will breed men up with an irreconcileable diſlike to all impoſition in Religion and Conſcience, and ſo unite them in a general abhorrence

horrence of Popery, as the Grandmother and Author of it. All Christendom over, all principles and parties born from a Liberty given in Religion, have an Antipathy in them to that Romish Yoke, and do naturally unite against the Popish Religion, as the grand and common Enemy of them all.

Let Liberty of Conscience once be given in a Protestant State, and though there be never so many differences amongst themselves, yet men of all persuasions will consenter in that. He that has the freedom of his Religion, will be concerned to defend it, and look upon Popery as the great Gyant he is in danger of. Experience and Fact, the best of all demonstrations, do evidence this: take a view of those places, where Liberty of Conscience hath been most given, and you will find there the greatest aversion to Popery, that is in any parts of Christendom.

'Tis in other places, where other Methods of Imposition and Persecution are used, that compliance with Popery hath been attempted, and projects set on foot to compound the Protestant and the Papists into an agreement.

'Tis Imposition in Religion sweeps the house, and keeps the Nest warm for Popery: Liberty of Conscience mortally stabs it; where that is once given, it may be said to the Pope, as it was to *Belshazzar*, *God hath numbred thy Kingdom, and finished it; and the place where he once tyrannized, shall know him no more.*

Lastly, If the Church of *Rome* understand their own interest, as well as good reason to believe they do, this Case is determined in our hands for upon every occasion since the reformation, both in *Germany*, *France*,

France, *Swisserland*, and all places where Liberty of Conscience hath been endeavoured, the Popes have *toto animo* every way opposed it, and declared it a thing perfectly destructive to the Church, and such, as where ever it was suffered, would destroy the Roman Faith; and in that Maxime, I believe their infallibility is not much to be denied. Some are so much otherwise minded, that they believe Liberty of Conscience will be the ready means to induce Popery again amongst us, the reasons of it seem invisible, unless it be to be done by some new Rule of contraries; it must either come to pass, by giving liberty in general to Protestants of differing persuasions, or else by giving liberty to the Papists themselves, as included in a general Liberty. For the first (I hope) it appears evidently to have another tendency.

And for the second, The giving Liberty to the Papists themselves amongst us, no man well informed, can imagine that they should be included in any such Liberty. Because in their practice amongst us, they refuse to give that publick assurance, every Subject ought to give of his fidelity that expects the favour due to a Subject.

And also Because their Principles are such, That if they derstand their own Religion, they can never be good Subjects to any Protestant State: He that knows not this, knows not the Roman Religion, and to prove it so by Fact. Amongst very many other Instances, let what was done here in the time of *Queen Elizabeth* to her; and at the same time in *France* to *Henry* the Fourth, for ever lie upon Record against them. Nor can a Papist ever become a true and hearty Subject to a Protestant Prince, but by that act he ceaseth to be so. And

as

as common justice does deny them all pretensions to Liberty, so common equity opposeth them; for as both they and their Religion abhor giving Liberty to any but themselves, so is their practice accordingly, for they never give liberty to a Soul living, that differs from them, where they are able and dare deny it.

To say, That Liberty of Conscience can have no other effect, but to tolerate damnable Heresies, and all kind of Sectaries, which is the usual way of discoursing it; and to enlarge into all kind of satyrical Rhetorick upon that Topick, is to put a Bears skin upon it, and then to bait it. 'Twill be to impose a thing of a very hard belief upon me, to say, That Truth never gains by Liberty, and that the Imposer is always in the right, and the sufferer in the wrong; especially considering, he that thinks me an Heretick, another thinks him so, and a fourth thinks us all so; and all the while we are all of us weak, imperfect, fallible men, sitting in judgment and sentencing one another; And there can be no other end of it, but that he that is strongest, make himself in the right, and destroys the rest. When ever Truth comes to suffer by Imposition, as many times it does, and comes afterwards to be acknowledged, the evil of such Imposition carries its own evidence. But suppose such Truth never gets any good, and Liberty should be only to men under Errors and Mistakes, 'twere not fit then to deny it, that is, 'twere not fit then to impose upon them; for Liberty is nothing but a Negative upon Force and Imposition; If we consult the good of such men themselves, so lapsed into Error, and desire their Conversion, Force and Imposition is no way to it; If we consult

our

our own Security, there is no danger at all can come by it; for as long as such errors lye in the understanding, and are only conversant about supernatural things, they have no reference at all to the being or well being of Mankind, as such: What hurt does an Error in Religion do me in my Neighbour, that is otherwise an honest and good man? He is rather in that an Object of my pity, and instruction, than of my anger.

If we desire to have all men of our Opinion, because we think we are in the right, 'tis a very commendable thing; and if we do it with such a publick Charity, we shall use only such Christian means, as naturally conduce to bring it about. But if through the pride of mens hearts, and the intention of their own exaltation thereby, they will have every body of their Opinion, and because they cannot convince and perswade them, will therefore force them, and trample upon them, that's an odious superintendency.

To say, That upon a prudential Account, Liberty should never be allow'd in Religion, because 'tis that which will unite Parties, and bring them to a Conformity amongst themselves, is to render them much more dangerous, is to say a thing upon a gross mistake, for common experience shows us the nothing more parties more amongst themselves, than Persecution; nor does any thing bring them so much together as that; 'tis like a great Storm, that drives Cattle that are scattered about, altogether, and brings them to meet in one common Shelter to save themselves.

Ridley

Ridley and *Hooper* agreed in the Goal, that would hardly have disputed themselves Friends.

There is no bond of union amongst disagreeing Persons, like Persecution; the common concern of their Security then begets Correspondency, Acquaintance, and such Intercourse and mutual Assistance, as endears them above any thing one to another. And for the danger there may be of any party, there is nothing sure so like to remove that, as Indulging them with a Liberty: the best way to be secured against the discontent of any party, is to remove the cause of such discontent; and the best way to be out of fear of them, unless you can totally destroy them, is to oblige them, and so at once to engage and win them over, and thereby disband our own fears.

A Modern Author tells us with particular remark, That *Mæcenus* heretofore gave advice to *Augustus*, *That upon no terms he should endure such, who would bring in any strange worship into the State.* I believe it, and 'twas such kind of Advice (no doubt) that caused the ten first Persecutions.

Methinks the Author should have remembred, that that Advice would have kept Christianity out of the World: For, if we follow the track of such Policy, we shall find, that what we now say against Tolerating Dissenters amongst our selves, The Papists first said, and do still say against us all; and if we go one step higher, the Heathens said the very same against the Christian Religion it self, and thought it a Factious, Fanatick project of sick-brain'd men, and a thing not to be endured,

that

that men ſhould not content themſelves with the ſame Gods that the reſt of the World worſhiped and acquieſced in. 'Tis a ſad thing and much to be lamented, That the Proteſtants ſhould take up the dregs of thoſe Politicks, and make uſe of them one againſt another, upon every ſmall difference amongſt themſelves.

The ſame Auther, in another part of his Book, propounds this queſtion,

If divers ways of worſhip (ſaith he) *be allowed in a Nation, what ſhall a Prince do? If he keep any men of any Profeſſion or Party out of employment for their Opinion ſake, he diſobliges that party; if he bring all men indifferently alike into employment, if he be of any party himſelf, he will diſoblige his own party, who will expect preheminence in that kind, and ſo in concluſion, by endeavouring to pleaſe all, he will loſe all.*

This is a knot very eaſily untyed. I will ſuppoſe a Prince ſtrict in the Profeſſion and Practice of what he thinks is the Truth; and the more ſtrict perſonally he is, the greater will the favour of Indulgence appear to thoſe that differ from him: but there is no neceſſity, that he ſhould make a party of thoſe, who are of his Opinion, diſtinct from the reſt of his Subjects; 'tis below his Greatneſs, and beſides his Intereſt ſo to do; they will ſoon become like the Sons of *Zeruiah*, Thoſe that are of his Opinion, he may think them, in his private judgment, better Chriſtians than others; but there is no Policy ſo to diſtinguiſh them, as if they were thereby better Subjects than others.

All

All men in a State, are to give one common Aſſurance of their Fidelity, and ſuch who are allowed a Liberty in their Religion, when differing from the publick Profeſſion; the Political end of it is, to make them good Subjects; and the end of that muſt needs be, to make them ſerviceable to their Prince; and there is no reaſon to doubt, but that they will be ſo, and eminently ſo, becauſe they lye under an Obligation to his Favour, thoſe of his own Opinion are not capable of. A Prince ſhould ſeat himſelf in his Throne, with an equal Political Aſpect to all his Subjects, and employ them, as their fitneſs for his Service qualifies them: There is no reaſon to narrow and limit a Prince to any Party, or to let any Party grow into ſuch a predominant Opinion, as if the Prince were confined to them.

No mans bare Opinion in ſuch things ſhould qualifie him for an employment, nor no mans Opinion ought to put a Negative upon him in that kind; that is for a Prince, after he has obliged all his Subjects to him, to loſe the uſe of a great part of them. Let a Prince but chooſe men to ſerve him, whoſe Ability and Fitneſs carries the evidence of his choice, and other Exceptions will ſoon vaniſh. 'Tis below the greatneſs of a Prince, to have any Subject pretend to employment, upon any ſcore, but his judgment of his fitneſs for it.

The King of *France* hath heretofore often with good ſucceſs employed his Proteſtant Subjects; Nay, has often truſted the Command of his whole Army in the hand of a Proteſtant, and yet feared not the diſobliging of the Popiſh party, or being thought a man of no Religi-

on for ſo doing. 'Tis a moſt abſurd and impolitick thing, becauſe men differ in ſome divine ſupernatural things, to put them under ſuch Characters, as to make them unuſeful one to another, in all other humane things.

Let a Prince once give Liberty of Conſcience, and he obliges all Parties to him, and makes them wholly depend upon him; the tenure of their Liberty will be a tenure *in Capite*, and *Quam diu ſe bene geſſerint*; and for employing men, and diſpenſing favours to them, let all Parties with a due ſubjection lye under the Prerogative and Soveraignty of his pleaſure.

Two things are with much earneſtneſs uſually Objected againſt the grant of Liberty;

Firſt, *That it is unbecomming the Zeal and Concern a Magiſtrate ſhould have for the Truth of Religion, to give Liberty to any thing, but what he thinks to be ſo, and that ſuch a lukewarmneſs, as Liberty to ſeveral Opinions ſuppoſeth, does no way become him.*

And the Second, *That giving Liberty to men of ſeveral Opinions, is the way to propagate and encreaſe them, and is of great danger to a State.*

For the Firſt, It is very fit that the Magiſtrate ſhould eſpouſe, what he thinks to be the Truth, and keep himſelf to a ſtrict practice of it, and uſe all lawful means to poſſeſs others with it; let him uſe all the means Chriſt and the Apoſtles uſed to Convince and Convert men;

men; but let him not lay violent hands upon mens persons, because he cannot satisfie their understandings; that is Zeal without Knowledge, and Religion without a Rule, either in Reason or Divinity; that is to run into so wide an extream from *Laodicean* lukewarmness, as to become like *Paul* before his Coversion, who saith of himself, *that he was mad, persecuting the Church.*

To say a Magistrate is lukewarm in Religion, because he will not force men to his Opinion, is to say, He is lukewarm, because he will not do a thing, that Christ hath no where required of him; and do a thing, that is to no purpose to do, for that very end for which it is done.

Tolerating men has no more in it, than not forcing men, 'tis only a Negative favour, there is nothing Affirmative in it; a Magistrate will never be charged with Lukewarmness in Religion, that makes use of all Gospel-means to promote Truth, and that he may do, and yet never violate the due Liberty of any mans Conscience. If we consult the antient practice of the first Christian Magistrates, we shall find it plain, That Liberty of Conscience was given by the Christian Emperours. *Constantine* did it fully. *Eusebius* in his life tells us, that he made a Decree in these words, *Ut parem cum fidelibus, ii qui errant, pacis & quietis fruitionem gaudentis accipiant.* 'Tis true, he banished *Arius*; but let any man consult the Ecclesiastical History, and he shall find *Arius* so factious and base a person, that there needed no part of his Opinion to be the cause of his exile. *Gratian* the Emperour made likewise a Decree for Li-

berty in Religion. The *Jews* had granted by all the Emperours, the ſame Rights with other Chriſtians. *Jovinian* and *Valentinian*, moſt noble Princes, ſuffered Chriſtians of ſeveral perſwaſions, to enjoy their Liberty: Of this, *Grotius* in his Book *De Imp. Sum. Poteſ. Circ. Sac. Cap.* 8. takes particular notice, adding theſe words, and ſaith he, which is more to be noted, *The Emperour did not only permit impunity to diſagreeing Sects, but often made Laws to order their Aſſemblies.* Liberty therefore in Religion is not either ſo new, or ſo ſtrange a thing, or ſo great a Monſter, as men would make it. State-Religions are not always infallibly true, Truth ſometimes keeps men from embracing them, it does ſo in many parts of Chriſtendom; and in that caſe a Negative Reſtraint upon the Magiſtrates compulſion, is the only ſhelter of Truth. The Wiſdom of Chriſt, who hath forbid the uſe of the Temporal power under the Goſpel, about Religion, hath left things beſt. For if a Magiſtrate be in the right, he may promote Truth, as far as in the nature of the thing, and by Chriſts appointment, it can be promoted; if he be not in the right, where the Temporal power does not interpoſe, men are ſecured in the profeſſion of Truth, and not hazard in refuſing a publick error.

He that would have the Magiſtrate force all men to his Religion, will himſelf be burnt by his own Principles, when he comes into a Country, where the State-Religion differs from him: To ſay, He is in the right, and the State that does it in the wrong, is a miſerable begging the Queſtion. If one Magiſtrate be to do it, all are to do it, and there can be no other rule of Truth and Error in that caſe, but what they think ſo. If a

Magiſtrate

Magiſtrate be once admitted to puniſh with death, what is really and truly in it ſelf an Hereſie, he may, and muſt by the ſame rule ſo puniſh every thing he thinks ſo; Where ſhall the definition of Hereſie terminate, and who ſhall ſet the Magiſtrate bounds in ſuch a caſe? Miſinformation, Paſſion, or ſome ſiniſter Intereſt, can only lead men into ſuch Principles, which tend to nothing, but to make Religion diſturb the Peace and Quiet of all mankind; and as one ſaith well, *to bring Chriſtians to a butchery one of another, and to make a meer Shambles of Chriſtendom.*

For the Second Objection, *That giving liberty to ſeveral Parties, encreaſeth them, and makes them dangerous to a State.*

First, 'Tis very fit, that whereſoever you will ſuppoſe Errors to be ſprung up, all the means Chriſt hath appointed for that end, ſhould be uſed to ſuppreſs them, and reclaim men from them; let their mouths be ſtoped with ſound Doctrine, and ſpiritual Cenſures; the only Queſtion is about the uſe of the Temporal power in ſuch things: And experience tell us, That ſince the World began, to this day, Principles and Opinions in the mind, were never extinguiſhed by the puniſhing the body; That old ſaying verifies it,

Sanguis Martyrum, ſemen Eccleſiæ.

Nay, there is nothing under the Sun to promote an Opinion in Religion, like making men ſuffer for it; the conſtancy and courage of men in ſuffering for an Opi-

nion, will sooner perswade men to it, than all the Discourses and Sermons in the World.

If the Magistrate take a violent course to root out all different Opinions in Religion, such as the Emperors heretofore, when Heathen, took with the Christians, and the Popish States, where they are able, do at this day with the Protestants, besides the cruelty of it, with which he will besmear himself, he will miss of his end, and find a succession of those Principles in others, rising out of the Ashes of those he destroys, as it used to be said heretofore by the Martyrs,

Quotes volvimur, totidem resurgimus.

If he take a mild and more gentle way of persecution, he only exasperates them, and then leaves them armed with all possible discontent.

Consider the giving of Liberty under these two heads.

First, the giving of it to several Opinions and Parties, where they are already actually existing.

And secondly, The giving Liberty for, as will occasion and produce such Parties and Opinions.

For the first, Where there are several Parties in Religion already in being, and diffused all over a Nation, as the Case is with us, it is the best way to indulge them, for they are by their number outgrown the political part of persecution.

For

For the ſecond, Conſideration of Liberty, the giving it ſo as will naturally produce ſeveral Principles and Opinions in men, he that would prevent that, muſt give no Liberty to the Proteſtant Religion, muſt not let the Bible be read by the Vulgar: There is no way to keep out ſeveral Opinions in Religion, but an implicit ignorant ſubjection to an impoſed Infallibility, and to do as the *Turks* do, who will not have any Learning or Diſcourſe amongſt them of Religion, for that very Reaſon, becauſe they will have no Religon but *Mahomet*, nor no Learning but the *Alcoran*; ſuch policy to murder mens Souls is hatched in Hell.

The very ART of PRINTING was at the firſt thought dangerous, becauſe it was looked on as a thing like to introduce ſeveral Opinions in Religion.

Cardinal Woolley, *in a Letter of his to the Pope, hath this paſſage about it.* That his Holineſs could not be ignorant what divers effects the new Invention of PRINTING had produced; for as it had brought in and reſtored Books and Learning, ſo together it hath been the occaſion of thoſe Sects and Schiſms which daily appeared in the World, but chiefly in *Germany*, where men begin now to call in queſtion the preſent Faith and Tenents of the Church, and to examine how far Religion is departed from its Primitive Inſtitution. And that which particularly was moſt to be lamented, they had exhorted Lay and Ordinary Men to read the Scriptures, and to pray in their Vulgar Tongue. That, if this were ſuffered, beſides all other dangers, the common People at laſt might come to believe that there was not ſo much uſe of the Clergy; for if men were perſwaded once they could make their own

way to God, and that Prayers in their Native and Ordinary Language might pierce Heaven, as well as Latin; How much would the Authority of the Maſs fall? How prejudicial might this prove unto all our Eccleſiaſtical Orders? Lord *Herberts* Hiſt. of *Henry* the Eighth.

Liberty of Conſcience lies as naturally neceſſary to a Proteſtant State, as Impoſition to a Popiſh State; he muſt be a good Artiſt that can find a right middle way between theſe two. 'Tis the Glory of Proteſtant States to have much of the knowledge of God amongſt them, and that variety of mens Opinions, about ſome leſs weighty, and more obſcure matters of Religion, as it much tends to a diſcovery of the Truth of them, ſo it no way breaks the Bond of Proteſtant Union, where men generally agree in the ſame Rule of Religion, and in all the chief and neceſſary Fundamentals of Salvation. Liberty of Conſcience in ſuch States, as it is their true and genuine Intereſt, and without which they will but deny themſelves thoſe advantages they might otherwiſe arrive at, ſo with the forementioned *Boundaries*, can never prove hurtful or dangerous, there being always a juſt diſtinction to be made between thoſe who deſire only to ſerve God, and ſuch who pretend that, to become injurious to men. And thus we have ſeen, that not only Religion but Reaſon, not only Duty but Intereſt, do invocate Princes and States in this Particular: To whom it may fitly be ſaid in the words of the Pſalmiſt, *Be wiſe now therefore, O ye Kings, and be inſtructed, O ye Judges of the Earth.*

I ſhall now add, by way of Poſt-ſcript, a Citation out of an ingenious Book, Entituled, *An Humble Apology for Nonconformiſts*, &c.

Poſt-ſcript

Poſt-ſcript.

HAD you rather that *Quakers* and *Romiſh Seducers* ſhould gather up Multitudes; and that Taverns, Alehouſes, and worſe places, ſhould on the Lords day be filled with the number of thoſe that abſent themſelves from the publick Aſſemblies, rather than that they ſhould be tolerated to hear a Sermon of Faith and Repentance, and other Duties towards God, and of Loyalty to the King, of Love and Charity one towards another, in a private houſe? For my own part, I confeſs in this Caſe, I would much rather go learn what that means, *The Harveſt truly is great, and the Labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harveſt, that he would ſend forth Labourers into his Harveſt.* Again, it is to be conſidered, that Mr. *Dod*, Mr. *Hildersham*, and others, were ſilenced formerly but in ſome Dioceſſes, and for ſome time; afterwards they got divers times liberty to preach. Mr. *Cotton* had a Licenſe to preach, under the broad Seal of *England*, procured by Biſhop *Williams*, then Lord Keeper, notwithſtanding his Inconformity. Mr. *Cartwright*, notwithſtanding he had writ ſo much, and ſo ſharply againſt Conformity, was ſuffered to preach, and enjoyed a place of Maſter of an Hoſpital at *Warwick*, to his

his dying day. Yea, Mr, *Brown*, the Father of the *Brownists*, if we believe the Historian, was suffered to keep a Living, and that no mean one, (*Achurch* in *Northamptonshire*) to his Death. The Bishops in those dayes, if they turned Men out of their Pulpits, let them have a Livelihood; either some way from their Livings, or else permitted them, or connived at least at their teaching of School. My Schoolmaster at a Grammer School, was one that had left a Living, rather than he would Conform. And 'tis storied of old Mr. *John Fox*, by Doctor *Heylyn*, that though he refused to subscribe to any thing but the Greek Testament, yet he enjoyed his Prebends place in *Salisbury* till his dying day. 'Tis worthy our notice, that these mens Yoak was more easie than ours: And that notwithstanding they are thought to be of different Principles from the present *Nonconformists*, yet certain it is, that they held it lawful to preach and pray, and keep days of Humiliation in private Houses. And I was told by one Mr. *W*. That *he never had any other Ordination but Prayers and Imposition of hands; by old Mr.* Dod, *and some other Ministers his Friends, in a private House.*

Upon the consideration of the Premises, my hearts desire is, That the present Age may labour to *imitate*, and *surpass* the Age past; the Right Reverend the Bishops their Predecessors, in their Forbearance and Moderation; and the *Nonconformists* theirs, in their Meekness and Peaceableness; That the Bishops would endeavour to be Reconcilers, and Repairers of our Breaches, and Restorers of our Pulpits to preach in; and that the *Nonconformists* would desire nothing but what may become Sons of Peace, and such as earnestly long after Unity, and

and had much rather, as becomes Labourers, be admitted to work in the Vineyard, than to ſtand any longer idle in the Market-place: Or as becomes Fiſhers of Men, to be caſting their Nets on the right ſide of the Ship, than to ſit any longer mending their Nets on the Shore. That ſo the Ages to come, when they ſhall read the Hiſtory of this Generation, when we all (*Conformiſts* and *Nonconformiſts*) are laid down to reſt quietly together in our Graves, may have no occaſion to riſe up and ſay, *That whereas the late War had made its thouſands of Separatiſts, Rigid Conformity had made its ten thouſands:* And all too, during the peaceable Reign of our moſt Gracious Soveraign, (a Son of Peace) *CHARLES the Clement*; as he hath manifeſted himſelf, by his Royal Letters and Declaration from *Breda*, his Royal Declarations ſince, and his preſent Princely Clemency; And this too, notwithſtanding great Animoſities, Exaſperations, and Irritations of ſome, on the one hand, out of an inordinate Zeal; and many Weakneſſes, Follies, and Provocations of ſome on the other, for lack of Knowledge.

FINIS.